

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency



Administrative Issuance: CFSA-06-14
(Supersedes Administrative Issuance CFSA-05-4)

TO: All CFSA Staff

FROM: Audrey Sutton, Deputy Director for Program Operations

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 19, 2006

RE: Youth Connections Conferences

This administrative issuance outlines the process and requirements for Youth Connections Conferences and supersedes the administrative issuance for *Youth Connections Conferences for Youth Transition Planning*. Youth Connections is the agency process utilized for preparing youth ages 14 - 20 for adult living. It provides a continuum of services, which ensures youth an opportunity of having a life long family connection as they prepare for adulthood. Between the ages of 14 - 20, Youth Connection Conferences are held to develop the ITILP, prepare youth to be successful, self-sufficient adults and identify family resources for adoption, guardianship and life long connection. Youth age 20 or within one (1) year of exiting care participate in the final Youth Connection Conferences which are held to discuss transition planning, and if necessary the further exploration of life long family connections that the youth will have long after they transition from care.

Youth Connections Conferences are a youth driven process designed to ensure that a more intensive effort is made to successfully transition youth into adulthood. This model utilizes a group conferencing model that includes the youth, her/his choice of participants and significant persons involved in their lives, coming together to develop a comprehensive plan to prepare the youth for adulthood, and explore life long family connections that the youth will have long after they transition from care. Youth who are not able to participate due to a mental disability and those youth who are unwilling to participate will have their transition planning completed with their social worker through the Individual Transitional Independent Living Plan (ITILP). Youth Connections Conferences for youth ages 14-17 will be coordinated by the social worker. The yearly facilitated Youth Connections Conference will be facilitated by the Office of Clinical Practice. Subsequent Youth Connections Conferences will be led by the youth's social worker.

Contract agencies with case management responsibility are required to comply with the provisions of this administrative issuance.

The legal authority for this administrative issuance is the Child and Family Services Agency Establishment Amendment Act of 2000, effective April 4, 2001, D.C. Law 13-277.

If you have any questions about this Administrative Issuance please contact the Administrator for the Office of Youth Development or the Administrator for the Office of Licensing and Monitoring.

General Requirements:

There are four (4) phases of Youth Connections Conferences. The first phase (youth ages 14-15 ½) focuses on the youth's vision of his/her initial goals to prepare the youth for adulthood and independence. The second phase (youth ages 15 ½ - 16) is the planning phase where the youth establishes his/her goals for independence utilizing the ITILP. The third phase (youth ages 17-20) is the phase where the youth reviews the progress of his/her goals and adjusts based on achievement of goals, resulting in a more detailed transition plan designed to attain self-sufficiency as an adult. The final phase (youth age 20 or within one (1) year of leaving care) concentrates on transition planning to ensure that a more intensive effort is made to successfully transition youth into independence. The following are the processes for each phase of the Youth Connections Continuum.

There are general requirements of each phase of the Youth Connections Conferences. These requirements are:

1. At a minimum, the following participants shall be present at the Youth Connections Conference:
 - a. youth;
 - b. social worker;
 - c. Independent Living Specialist;
 - d. youth's foster parent or caregiver; and
 - e. youth's biological parents, if requested by the youth.
2. The following participants may be present (but are not required) at Youth Connections Conferences:
 - a. GAL;
 - b. AAG; as appropriate; and
 - c. Any other significant individuals as designated by the youth.
3. Youth Connections Conferences facilitated by the Office of Clinical Practice are held:
 - a. No more than thirty (30) days following the youth's 14th birthday;
 - b. Within thirty (30) days before or after the youth's 15th, 16th and 17th birthdays; and
 - c. Within thirty (30) days before or after the youth's 20th birthday.
4. Subsequent Youth Connections Conferences shall occur every 180 days and be led by the social worker in order to update the ITILP (*See attachment A*).
5. The Independent Living Specialist shall follow-up with the social worker within 90 days of the facilitated Youth Connections Conference to ensure that the goals of the ITILP are being addressed.
6. All participants shall sign the attached ITILP form or Youth Transition Plan (YTP) form (*See attachment B*).

Youth Ages 14 - 15 ½:

Youth Connections Conferences for youth 14-15 ½ are held to engage the youth and focus on his or her vision of their initial goals to prepare the youth for adulthood and independence. The following requirements for Youth Connections Conferences for youth ages 14-15 ½ are as follows:

1. The initial facilitated Youth Connections Conference shall occur for youth who are 14 years of age and do not have the goal of adoption.
2. Critical topic areas of the initial Youth Connections Conference shall include, but not be limited to the following:
 - a. Identification of family resources for Adoption, Guardianship, and other life-long connections;
 - b. Life skill assessment at least annually;
 - c. Money management;
 - d. Opportunities to practice life skills;
 - e. Self-care;
 - f. Social development;
 - g. Work and study habits; and
 - h. Academic and social preparation towards adult living.
3. The social worker oversees the implementation of the plan, which may include any of the permanency options identified for the youth. The youth's social worker shall update the *ITILP* every 90 days until the permanency plan is achieved.

Youth Ages 15 ½ - 16:

The second phase of the Youth Connections Conferences introduces the Individual Transitional Independent Living Plan (ITILP), where the youth begins to develop a plan for independence. The requirements for Youth Connections Conferences at this phase are:

1. Facilitated Youth Connections Conference shall occur for youth who are 15 ½ - 16 years of age and do not have the goal of adoption.
2. Critical topic areas shall include, but not be limited to the following:
 - a. Identification of family resources for Adoption, Guardianship, and other life-long connections;
 - b. Enrollment in the Center for Keys for Life (CKL);
 - c. Referral to the Department of Employment Services (DOES);
 - d. Life skills assessment
 - e. Career goal exploration;
 - f. Leadership activities; and
 - g. Expectations about the youth's continuation with any service program, including responsibilities of the youth, social worker, foster parents, biological parents or relatives and any service provider.
3. A written ITILP shall be developed and updated at least every 90 days.
4. The ITILP shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a. A summary of services that are or will be provided;
 - b. A summary of the youth's educational and medical histories (including mental health and dental histories and plan);
 - c. Youth's education/vocation assessments and plan;
 - d. Establishment of supports and resources to be provided to the youth;
 - e. Discussion about youth's living arrangement;
 - f. An estimated budget (including sources and amount of income/assets);
 - g. Parenting;
 - h. Additional Life Skills;
 - i. Cultural characteristics; and
 - j. Signatures of all participants on an attached service agreement.

Youth Ages 17- 20:

Youth Connections Conferences for youth ages 17-20 shall address the youth's transition from foster care to independence. This phase reviews the child's ITILP and the youth's success at achieving stated goals. Goals may be readjusted to incorporate new plans.

1. Critical topic areas shall include, but not be limited to the following:
 - a. Any concerns the youth has about transitioning from care;
 - b. Any difficulties with the transition to adulthood, as foreseen by the foster parents, biological parents, relatives or any professionals who have been providing services to the youth;
 - c. Continued exploration of life long connections;
 - d. Expectations about the youth's continuation with any service program, including responsibilities of the youth, treatment worker, foster parents, biological parents or relatives and any service provider;
 - e. Any benefits which the youth shall be entitled to such as housing allowance, terms for payment of educational expenses, and continuation of other financial support;
 - f. Employment;
 - g. Driver's education;
 - h. Any benefits, such as Medicaid, which may become available or which may be discontinued; and
 - i. Aftercare services.

2. A written ITILP shall be developed and updated at least every 90 days.

Youth Age 20 or Within One (1) Year of Leaving Care:

Youth age 20 or leaving care within one (1) year participate in the final Youth Connection Conferences which are held to discuss transition planning, and if necessary the further exploration of life long family connections that the youth will have long after they transition from care. A preparatory meeting will occur 30 days prior to the initial Youth Transition Planning Meeting. This meeting will continue the exploration of life long connections and begin the next step planning in critical topic areas to be discussed at future Youth Transition Planning Meetings.

1. Youth Transition Planning Meetings for Youth Connections shall address, but not be limited to the following:
 - a. Any concerns the youth has about transitioning from care;
 - b. Any difficulties with the transition to adulthood, as foreseen by the foster parents, biological parents, relatives or any professionals who have been providing services to the youth;
 - c. Continued exploration of life long connections;
 - d. Expectations about the youth's continuation with any service program, including responsibilities of the youth, treatment worker, foster parents, biological parents or relatives and any service provider;
 - e. Any benefits which the youth shall be entitled to such as housing allowance, terms for payment of educational expenses, and continuation of other financial support;
 - f. Employment;
 - g. Any benefits, such as Medicaid, which may become available or which may be discontinued; and
 - h. Aftercare services.
2. The transition plan shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Reason for transition;
 - b. A summary of services that were provided during care;
 - c. A summary of the youth's educational and medical, including mental health and dental histories;
 - d. Estimated date the youth will leave agency care;
 - e. Establishment of supports and resources to be provided to youth in preparation for transition;
 - f. Youth's anticipated living arrangements, including expected address and telephone number after discharge, if known;
 - g. Youth's education/vocation plan;
 - h. Youth's employment plan;
 - i. An estimated budget;
 - j. Medical and dental plan
 - k. Sources and amount of income/assets;
 - l. Specification of aftercare services; and
 - m. Any other plans necessary to facilitate the youth's discharge from care



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency
Youth Connections Conference
Individual Transitional Independent Living Plan (ITILP)
[DATE]



IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

1. Youth's Name: _____	2. Date of Birth: _____
3. Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	4. FACES Client ID: _____
5. Permanency Goal: _____	
6. Youth's Current Placement Provider: _____	7. Phone Number: _____
7. Address: _____	
(Street)	(City)
(State)	(Zip)
8. Social Worker: _____ Supervisor: _____	

ASSESSMENT	Strengths	Needs
Physical		
Mental		
Emotional		
Academic		
Social		
Familial		
Recreational		
Life Skills		
Cultural		

OBJECTIVE	GOALS	TASKS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMEFRAME
Placement/Housing – Are there any current issues with the youth’s placement?				
Financial – Does the youth have a savings/checking account? What, if any, is the youth’s additional income Is the youth receiving budget training?				
Life Connections - Does the youth have regular contact with and support from family, extended family, and significant others? What services, supports and other interventions are needed to support the youth’s connectedness and support\? Does the youth have a visitation plan?				
Life Skills – Has the youth been referred to the Center of Keys for Life? Has the youth actively participated in the CKL activities? What are the plans for engaging the youth in active participation in the CKL?				

OBJECTIVE	GOALS	TASKS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMEFRAME
Educational/Vocational - Identify services, supports and interventions needed for the youth. Has the youth enrolled/completed high school? If the youth is in HS, what is the date of completion? Are there any barriers to completion of High School? If the youth plans to attend college or vocational school, identify supports (i.e. pre-college services) needed for the educational plan.				
Job Readiness – Does the youth have part-time or full-time employment? What services, supports, and other interventions are anticipated to support the youth in finding employment? Has the youth participated in the Summer Youth Employment Program? Has the youth been referred to DOES for job readiness training?				
Health (medical, dental, and vision) – Does the youth have health needs? Has the youth had a comprehensive physical (including dental and vision) within the past 12 months? If the youth is not parenting or pregnant, is there awareness around pregnancy prevention?				

OBJECTIVE	GOALS	TASKS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMEFRAME
Emotional/Psychological - Identify the services, supports and other interventions necessary to meet the youth's mental health needs and the changes that are desired or anticipated in the youth's emotional well-being.				
Pregnant and Parenting Youth - Identify the parenting/pregnant youth's needs to successfully complete the pregnancy and/or to effectively raise and care for her/his children, keeping in mind any special services needed due to health or mental health issues.				
Other -				

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

LIST PARTICIPANTS

Name	Relationship to Youth	Signature	Date

Next Scheduled ITILP Conference: _____

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency



YOUTH TRANSITION PLAN
[DATE]

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

1. Youth Name: _____ 2. Date of Birth: _____
4. Gender: _____ 5. FACES Child ID#: _____ 7. Permanency Goal: _____
9. Youth's Current Placement Provider _____ Youth's Address: _____
- City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
10. Social Worker: _____ Phone: _____
11. Supervisor: _____ Phone: _____
12. Date of Transition Planning Conference _____ 13. Anticipated Date of Youth's Transition from Care _____
14. Reason for Transition: _____

OBJECTIVE	GOALS	TASKS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMEFRAME
Housing – Where is youth going to live? What are the necessary supports and services needed for the youth to get housing?				
Financial – What is the youth's earned income? What, if any, is the youth's additional income? What are the youth's monthly expenses?				
Life Connections - Does the youth have regular contact with and support from family, extended family, and significant others? What services, supports and other interventions are needed to support the youth's connectedness and support for transition to adulthood?				
Crisis Management – Does the youth need assistance in know how to navigate public and private systems? Does the youth know who to contact for help navigating systems?				

OBJECTIVE	GOALS	TASKS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMEFRAME
Educational/Vocational - Identify services, supports and interventions needed for the youth, who has not completed high school or not attained GED. If the youth plans to attend college or vocational school, identify supports needed for the educational plan.				
Employment – Does the youth have part-time or full-time employment? What services, supports, and other interventions are anticipated to support the youth in finding employment?				
Health (medical, dental, and vision) – Does the youth have health insurance? Does the youth have health needs? Has the youth had a comprehensive physical (including dental and vision) within the past 12 months? Does the youth have a health care provider(s)?				
Emotional/Psychological - Identify the services, supports and other interventions necessary to meet the youth's mental health needs and the changes that are desired or anticipated in the youth's emotional well-being.				

OBJECTIVE	GOALS	TASKS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIMEFRAME
Pregnant and Parenting Youth - Identify the parenting/pregnant youth's needs to successfully complete the pregnancy and/or to effectively raise and care for her/his children, keeping in mind any special services needed due to health or mental health issues.				
Other -				

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

[illegible]

LIST PARTICIPANTS

Name	Relationship to Youth	Signature	Date

Next Scheduled Transition Planning Conference: _____